

CLAIMS TO INVENTION

2. An apparatus for use in an information system comprising a computer operably coupled to a database storing information, the apparatus comprising:

a portable wireless data terminal, operably coupled to the computer and database via a wireless communication channel, having local memory storing information loaded from the database via the wireless communication channel and a graphical user interface for interacting with a user to enter user-supplied information, wherein the user-supplied information is communicated to the computer over the wireless communication channel for storage in the database, the graphical user interface including:

multiple virtual regions displayed on a display screen, wherein each virtual region corresponds to an event identifier;

a touch screen for sensing location of user contact; and

an event handler for identifying one of the virtual regions that corresponds to the location of user contact, determining a specific event identifier corresponding to the identified virtual region, and processing a predetermined sequence for the specific event identifier.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the portable wireless data terminal comprises a handheld computing device.

4. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the portable wireless data terminal has an integrated code reader for data entry.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the code reader comprises an optical bar code reader.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the data comprises product information.

7. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the data comprises information identifying a medical patient.

8. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the data comprises information related a medical patient.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the data comprises one of personal information gathered upon admittance for care, information related to past medical history of the medical patient, and information related to vital statistics of the medical patient.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the vital statistics include one of systolic, diastolic, pulse, temperature and respiratory information.

11. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the portable wireless data terminal further comprises a message notification mechanism that notifies the user of receipt of a message from the computer over the wireless communication channel.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the message notification mechanism generates one of an audio signal, video signal and vibration signal.

13. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a virtual keypad displayed on the display screen for entering symbols associated with keys of the keypad.

14. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises at least one scroll bar displayed on the display screen.

15. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises at least one scroll bar format and a rolling key format.

16. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a menu screen and a graphing screen, wherein each selection from the menu screen corresponds to a virtual region and an associated processing sequence.

17. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein each virtual region of the graphical user interface corresponds to a predefined processing sequence which is initiated by the user by contacting the associated virtual region.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the predefined processing sequence involves one of a data entry operation, a data transmit operation that communicates data stored thereto to another computing device, and a code scan operation for data entry.

19. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a display screen displaying multiple icons.

20. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the graphical user interface comprises a text input mechanism that enables the user to enter at least a portion of a desired text data, that automatically searches data stored in memory to retrieve text data closest to the portion of desired text data entered, and displays the retrieved text data on the display screen.